

# Critical Days of Summer Safety Campaign 2020



Week 4 of 16

## Local Critters and Crawlers

*A great way to relieve the stress of COVID lockdown is to go hiking and walking in the local area. As well as social distancing, and face masks, you may want to think about the natural hazards that await you. The thick forests in Japan are home to many insects and animals; some of which can be hazardous to your health! Watching where you walk and what you touch can keep you from getting bitten or stung.*

### Insects



- **Asian Hornets.** Most active between August and October. Venom can dissolve human tissue.
- **Centipedes.** (pictured top right) Adults can reach 15 inches in length and can run quickly. Centipedes may bite, causing severe pain, numbness, discoloration and inflammation.
- **Caterpillars.** Brushing against their tiny hairs (setae) can cause allergic reactions, pain, itching, and rash.
- **Fire Ants.** They are aggressive and will sting and inject venom, which causes a burning sensation.
- **Ticks.** Can carry viruses that cause serious diseases in humans and may be fatal.
- **Black Widow.** A bite from a black widow can be distinguished from other insect bites by the two puncture marks it makes in the skin. The venom is a neurotoxin that produces pain at the bite area and then spreads to the chest, abdomen, or the entire body.



### Snakes



**Yamakagashi.** A thin snake, 2-4 feet long. It has black dots and yellow-brown bands spotted with red patterns. It has a thin neck and a triangular shaped head. Can be

found by rice paddies, lakes, and marshes. They can secrete a poisonous substance that can cause blindness.

**Mamushi.** 1-2 feet long with a triangle shaped head, narrow neck, and flared jaw. Either grayish brown or dark brown black with pairs of blackish brown dots on both sides.



Can be found in damp forested terrain, bamboo thickets, and even dry riverbeds. Slow to react to things so it may not move right away if you approach it.



## **Japanese Black Bear**

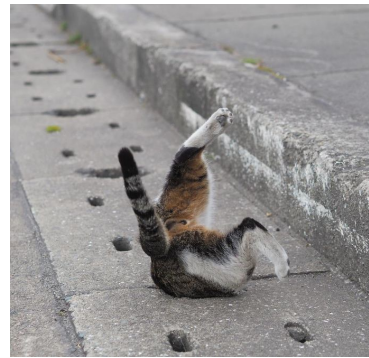
They live in mountainous areas and are about the same size as humans. They hibernate from December to April so are quite hungry in the early spring. Bears are omnivores, but about 90 percent of a bear's diet consists of plants.

Bears have very good senses of hearing and smell. They also have sharp claws and teeth, and can run at up to 25 mph. So remember: Even if you see a bear in the distance, you don't have time to snap a photo.

If you see one of the animals, do not panic or yell. This could agitate the bear and cause an attack. Also, the bear may chase you down if you run. Instead, back away very slowly while making sure not to show your back to the animal, and then calmly leave the area. If the bear attacks, pepper spray is said to be an effective repellent.

## **Other Animal Cautions and Tips**

**Tanuki.** It is tempting to want to feed this cute “raccoon dog” but it is a wild animal and should be avoided.



**Strays.** Stray animals can carry diseases and their bites can easily become infected. Not feeding them or petting them is always the best option.

**Crows.** Bigger and meaner than the US version. Over the last 20 years, their population has exploded and the damage they cause is costly. Garbage attracts crows quickly so make sure your trash bins are securely closed.



**Questions? Contact the MCAS Iwakuni Station Safety Center.**